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Jeffrey S. Barkin, MD, President | Erik N. Steele, DO, President-Elect | Paul R. Cain, MD, Chair, Board of Directors  
Andrew B. MacLean, JD, CEO | Dan Morin, Director of Communications & Government Affairs

TO: The Honorable Anne Carney, Chair  
The Honorable Thom Harnett, Chair  
Members, Joint Standing Committee On Judiciary

FM: Dan Morin, Director of Communications and Government Affairs

DATE: February 17, 2022

RE: **Support**  
LD 906, An Act To Provide Passamaquoddy Tribal Members Access to Clean Drinking Water

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The [Maine Medical Association](#) is the state's largest professional physician organization representing more than 4300 physicians, residents, and [medical students](#) across all clinical specialties, organizations, and practice settings is submitting testimony in **support** of [LD 906](#), An Act To Provide Passamaquoddy Tribal Members Access to Clean Drinking Water.

Prior to the 130<sup>th</sup> Legislature convening, the Maine Medical Association determined that public health disparities concerning minoritized populations would be considered a core foundational priority as part of its advocacy efforts.

Water source contaminants can lead to serious health issues, including gastrointestinal illness, reproductive problems, and neurological disorders. Infants, young children, pregnant women, the elderly, and people with weakened immune systems may be especially at risk for illness.

Many indigenous communities throughout the United States do not have access to reliably safe water, with issues ranging from deteriorating water quality to regulatory problems and lack of state and local government support.

It is our understanding that the source of water for the Passamaquoddy Reservation at Pleasant Point comes from Boyden Lake surface water. Organic contaminants oftentimes make not only potable water unsafe but at times can make bathing unhealthy. The Maine physician community believes this to be yet another public health crisis for a minoritized population that faces innumerable quality of life obstacles every day, whether they be economic, psychological, or health related.

The Maine Medical Association strongly supports the section(s) of LD 906 that directly relate to converting identified lands from fee to trust status, allowing those plots of land under ownership of the tribe to be drilled for ground water. Boyden Lake's depth is shallow enough that contaminants such as trihalomethanes make the water unusable and unsafe.

The MMA takes no position on the remaining parts of the bill.

Thank you for reviewing our comments in **support** of [LD 906](#), An Act To Provide Passamaquoddy Tribal Members Access to Clean Drinking Water.